

To: R2 EPA NY NJ PR and VI[R2_EPA_NY_NJ_PR_and_VI@epa.gov]
From: Mears, Mary
Sent: Fri 5/20/2016 1:02:24 PM
Subject: FW: PFOA/PFOS region 2 news clips

Apologies for re-sending. I had the wrong group – it didn't include managers.

From: Mears, Mary
Sent: Friday, May 20, 2016 8:25 AM
To: R2 EPA Region 2 (EPA Staff) <R2_EPA_Region_2_EPA_Staff@epa.gov>
Subject: PFOA/PFOS region 2 news clips

Albany Times-Union

EPA sets new level for chemical PFOA in drinking water

EPA move comes as state declares second Superfund site over PFOA chemical pollution

By Brendan J. Lyons Updated 12:18 am, Friday, May 20, 2016

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday issued a lifetime drinking water health advisory of 70 parts per trillion for human exposure to the manmade chemical, perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA.

Six public water systems in New York State, including two in Rensselaer County, have detected PFOA in their supplies in excess of the EPA's new guidance standard.

The EPA's long-awaited action comes as health and environmental officials in New York, Vermont and New Hampshire are grappling with the discovery of elevated levels of PFOA in public water systems and private wells. The contamination has been linked to factories that used PFOA in their manufacturing processes, in some cases dating back decades.

Also Thursday, the state Department of Environmental Conservation declared that a Petersburg plastics company, Taconic, will be designated as a state Superfund site after the factory was linked to PFOA contamination of local water supplies. In January, the state announced the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics plant in the village of Hoosick Falls was being declared a state Superfund site. The designation allows the state to investigate the extent of the water contamination and to begin remediation immediately.

Taconic's plant on Route 22 near the Little Hoosic River makes specialty products including silicone-coated fabrics and tapes. In 2005, the state became aware of PFOA

contamination of aquifers around the plant and the company installed a carbon-filter system on the wells at its plant. The company also provided alternative water treatment systems for nearby residents.

State water systems with PFOA/PFOS above 70 ppt:

1. Hampton Bays Water District (PFOS)*
2. Suffolk County Water Authority (PFOS)
3. New Windsor Consolidated Water District (PFOA/PFOS)
4. City of Newburgh (PFOS)
5. Hoosick Falls (PFOA)
6. Petersburg (PFOA)

Below 70 ppt

1. Fort Drum (PFOA)
2. Town of Hempstead (PFOA)

Source: NYS Department of Health

* In a more recent test Hampton Bays was below 70 ppt.

The contamination of the Rensselaer County water supplies has brought criticism on the state for not taking action before this year, and on the EPA for taking years to issue a long-term health advisory for exposure to PFOA and other perfluorinated chemicals that have been used in manufacturing for decades. The EPA's announcement Thursday came after pressure was put on the agency, including by U.S. Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-New York, to release the advisory.

"Where these chemicals are detected above the advisory levels, we're recommending the water system operators go back and do confirmatory testing," said Joel Beauvais, deputy assistant administrator for the EPA's Office of Water. "We're also recommending that systems promptly provide notice to residents and users of water systems."

Beauvais said the EPA's recommendation is based on toxicity studies in mice. He also acknowledged the advisory is "non-regulatory" and only provides state and local officials guidance on the "EPA's best assessment" of the health risks.

State Health Commissioner Howard Zucker and acting Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos issued a joint statement commending the EPA for issuing the advisory and said that "both of our agencies are thoroughly reviewing the EPA's guidance as we continue our aggressive efforts to ensure that all communities in New York state have access to water that's safe to drink."

The EPA's advisory level is well below the levels of PFOA that were detected in public water supplies over the past two years in Hoosick Falls, Petersburg, North Bennington, Vt., and Merrimack, N.H.

In addition, health and environmental officials said tests have also revealed levels of PFOA in dozens of private wells in Rensselaer County that are much higher than the EPA's guideline.

Officials with the state Health Department and Department of Environmental Conservation could not immediately provide information Thursday about how many water systems in New York may contain PFOA, which has been used since the 1940s to make products such as nonstick coatings, such as Teflon, and heat-resistant wiring and other specialty products.

In 2009, the EPA established a guideline that a level of 400 parts per trillion is a safe level for "short-term" consumption of the water. Earlier this year, the EPA issued a provisional health advisory of 100 ppt. Meanwhile, other states have set far lower acceptable levels of PFOA in public water systems, including New Jersey, which has set a level of 40 ppt.

Zucker, the state's health commissioner, in January said the state Health Department was reviewing its position on acceptable levels of PFOA in drinking water and would set a new safety limit within weeks. But the state did not issue a new advisory.

Robert A. Bilott, an Ohio attorney who is helping represent an estimated 3,500 people in a class-action lawsuit against DuPont, which manufactured and used perfluorinated chemicals such as PFOA in its products, has been urging the EPA for years to adopt a permanent health advisory for long-term exposure to PFOA in drinking water. Bilott has represented "tens of thousands of individuals in various communities across the country who have been injured because of the contamination of their drinking water with PFOA."

"The lower number and acknowledgement of the need to consider the combined amount of PFCs in water is a long-overdue step in the right direction, but the guideline is still too high, as it will allow ever-increasing, unacceptable levels of PFOA to continue to build up in the blood of those exposed," Bilott said.

David Engel, an attorney for Healthy Hoosick Water, a grass-roots group that formed to draw attention to the PFOA contamination in the village, said the EPA's advisory falls short. He said residents in communities like Hoosick Falls who were exposed to elevated levels of the chemical for years should not be exposed to any amount of PFOA in their drinking water.

"The EPA has not gone far enough," Engel said. "There was considerable scholarship that's been done by a variety of groups ... that suggest there may be virtually no safe level of exposure. The best approach is to get exposure down to non-detect. That said, we understand that EPA is attempting to accommodate and placate a variety of interests."

Three years ago, a science panel released the results of a multiyear study that examined PFOA exposure and health risks in several Ohio Valley communities, where PFOA, also known as C8, was emitted since the 1950s from the Washington Works plant in Parkersburg, W.Va. The panel found probable links between PFOA exposure and high cholesterol, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, testicular cancer, kidney cancer and pregnancy-induced hypertension.

Bilott said the science panel's peer-reviewed report was paid for by DuPont and, as a result of the panel's findings, the company has to concede in the personal-injury lawsuits that PFOA causes cancer.

In Albany, numerous lawsuits were filed this year in U.S. District Court seeking class-action status on behalf of current and former Hoosick Falls residents, including some who allege they suffered serious health effects that could be linked to PFOA exposure.

According to the EPA, PFOA was detected in blood serum in 99 percent of the U.S. population between 1999 and 2012. However, the EPA said the levels of PFOA in human blood have been decreasing since U.S. companies began to phase out production of the chemical more than 10 years ago. Still, water resources contaminated by PFOA have been associated with releases from manufacturing sites, industrial sites, fire/crash training areas, and industrial or municipal waste sites where products are disposed of or applied, the agency said.

Thousands of people whose blood was tested in that area of the Ohio Valley had elevated levels of PFOA, including at levels as high as 40 parts per billion.

In Hoosick Falls, where hundreds of people signed up for state-sponsored blood tests in February, the results of those tests are expected to be released beginning next week.

In February, the state Department of Environmental Conservation asked two corporations, Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics and Honeywell International, to enter consent orders that would require them to clean up the remnants of the toxic chemical that polluted water supplies in and around Hoosick Falls.

The DEC said its preliminary investigation determined the two corporations, and possibly others, are the "parties responsible" for the presence of high levels of PFOA that were discovered two years ago in the village's public water supply. The chemical

has since been detected in private wells in and around the village and at other locations in Rensselaer County, including the town of Petersburg.

Saint-Gobain operates two plants in Hoosick Falls, including a McCaffrey Street facility the company has owned since 1999. That plant is a few hundred yards from the village's water-treatment plant and has been a focus of the contamination.

PFOA, a man-made chemical, was discovered in Hoosick Falls' water system by a resident, Michael Hickey, who began researching the issue because of what he believed was a high rate of cancer in the village where he grew up. His father, John, who worked at the Saint-Gobain plant for decades, died of kidney cancer in 2013. Hickey paid to have samples of village water tested for PFOA and notified village officials in 2014 that the tests showed the levels of the chemical found in the system exceeded federal health advisories.

Saint-Gobain, which said it learned of the pollution in December 2014, has voluntarily funded the distribution of bottled water and said it will pay for the installation of a long-term water filtration system at the village's water treatment plant. The state has been installing individual filter systems at residences and businesses that have private wells with PFOA contamination, and also for residents who request the filters.

In 2006, the EPA reached an agreement with DuPont and other manufacturers to stop producing or using PFOA, although DuPont continued producing PFOA because the agreement did not call for the end of production of the chemical until 2015. The EPA settlement with DuPont came less than a year after DuPont agreed to pay \$10.25 million in civil penalties to settle the complaint brought by the EPA regarding the company's PFOA pollution in the Midwest. At the time, it was the largest civil administrative penalty ever obtained by the EPA under federal environmental statutes.

"Communities like Hoosick Falls, Petersburg and Newburgh understand all too well the uncertainty and anxiety that contamination from these chemicals can cause," Schumer said in a statement. "The EPA's new guidance will go a long way in protecting public health and arming local officials with the most up-to-date information to keep our drinking water safe from harmful contaminants."

blyons@timesunion.com • 518-454-5547 • @brendan_lyonstu

WAMC Radio (NPR)

EPA Sets New Guidelines For PFOA, PFOS; Superfund Declared For Petersburg

By Lucas Willard

(To Listen to Piece: <http://wamc.org/post/epa-sets-new-guidelines-pfoa-pfos-superfund-declared-petersburgh#stream/0>)

The industrial chemicals PFOA and PFOS have caused trouble for residents of communities like Hoosick Falls, Newburgh, Petersburg, and Bennington. Federal officials have advised residents to stop drinking the contaminated water and state governments are still putting measures in place to deliver clean water to residents.

The perfluorinated chemicals that have tainted water supplies have been linked to ill-health effects including various forms of cancer.

There's also been confusion between federal and state agencies over safe thresholds for the chemicals, which until recently, were not listed as hazardous substances or required for testing.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Thursday announced new lifetime exposure guidelines for PFOA and PFOS at 70 parts per trillion.

Joel Beauvais, Deputy Assistant Administrator with EPA's Office of Water, says the new numbers reflect the most recent science and testing.

"These will supercede the prior values and should be protective over the course of a lifetime of exposure, including sensitive populations," said Beauvais.

In 2009, EPA set a short-term exposure guideline of 100 ppt for PFOA and PFOS. Perhaps due to a lack of long-term exposure guidelines, state governments have not had consistent recommended levels. Vermont has acted under a 20 ppt threshold while New York has used EPA's former limit of 100ppt.

State and federal officials have been calling on EPA to set more concrete exposure thresholds, including U.S. Senator Charles Schumer.

Schumer said in a statement he was pleased with the new numbers, and said "the EPA's new guidance will go a long way in protecting public health and arming local officials with the most up-to-date information to keep our drinking water safe from harmful contaminants."

Beauvais said the numbers will allow governments to make the appropriate determinations and next steps.

"Because these two chemicals have similar types of adverse health effects, our recommendation is that folks look at the individual or combined concentrations of PFOA and PFOS and compare that to the 70ppt level."

Meanwhile, the Taconic company in Petersburg has been declared a New York State Superfund Site by the Department of Environmental Conservation. The industrial facility is being investigated as the source of PFOA contaminants found in the town's municipal water supply and private wells.

Through the designation, DEC has identified Taconic to be responsible for the pollution. DEC Acting Commissioner Basil Seggos said as the investigation continues, the department “will take aggressive actions to hold the responsible party accountable for all costs associated with full remediation of all impacted areas.”

As with Saint-Gobain in Hoosick Falls, Taconic has been supplying Petersburg residents with bottled water.

The state has already directed Taconic to install a treatment system on Petersburg’s water supply. The company has begun construction of a new carbon filtration system.

The town of Petersburg has also started to upgrade the existing water infrastructure.

Town supervisor Peter Schaaphok welcomes the work of state and county officials and Taconic so far, but hopes the Superfund designation will move things along more quickly.

“It’s been working well, but I think with the Superfund thing it’s not going to go even faster, which will be a good thing for people, I think,” said Schaaphok.

Schaaphok says EPA’s new exposure thresholds will help restore some public confidence in the work being done.

NY Times (Associated Press Story)

EPA Suggests Tighter Limits for Industrial Chemical in Water

ASSOCIATED PRESS MAY 19, 2016, 5:35 P.M. E.D.T.

WASHINGTON — Federal regulators announced tighter guidelines Thursday for human exposure to an industrial chemical used for decades in such consumer products as non-stick pans, stain-resistant carpets and microwave popcorn bags.

The cancer-causing chemical perfluorooctanoic acid, known as PFOA, has been found in the tap water of dozens of factory towns near industrial sites where it was manufactured. DuPont, 3M and other U.S. chemical companies voluntarily phased out the use of PFOA in recent years.

Also at issue is the related chemical perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, used in firefighting foam.

The Environmental Protection Agency issued the stricter guidelines for the chemicals after years of pressure from public health experts and advocacy groups. The agency

said the new limits were prompted by recent scientific studies linking PFOA and PFOS to testicular and kidney cancers, as well as birth defects and liver damage.

"EPA will continue sharing the latest science and information so that state and local officials can make informed decisions and take actions to protect public health," said Joel Beauvais, the EPA's deputy assistant administrator for the Office of Water. "This is an important part of our broader effort to support states and public water systems as we work together to strengthen the safety of America's drinking water."

Trace amounts of PFOA and PFOS can be detected in the blood of almost every American as the result of exposure through food and consumer products. But of specific concern to regulators is the risk posed to residents in the relatively small number of communities where higher levels of PFOA and PFOS have been found in public drinking water.

EPA now says long-term exposure to either chemical at concentrations above 70 parts per trillion could have adverse health impacts. That's significantly lower than the agency's prior advisory level based on short-term exposure of 400 parts per trillion.

Under the EPA's new guidance, water systems where concentrations of PFOA or PFOS are found above 70 parts per trillion are advised to promptly notify local residents and consult with their state drinking water agencies.

EPA said public notification is especially important for pregnant or nursing women because of the impact the chemicals can have on the development of fetuses and infants who are breastfed or drinking formula made with tap water.

In 2013, EPA ordered about 4,800 public water systems nationwide to test for PFOA. More than 100 cities and towns in 29 states had trace amounts of PFOA, but none exceeded 400 parts per trillion.

However, the new lower limit means that a handful of those communities will now qualify as having water with contamination levels above the advised threshold.

EPA's national survey also did not include many smaller communities located near sites where the chemicals were used for decades.

Hoosick Falls, New York, is located near a plastics plant and where the water supply system serves just 4,500 people, wasn't included in the testing. PFOA levels of 600 part per trillion were discovered in village wells in 2014 because residents demanded testing amid concerns about what they perceived as a high cancer rates.

More recently, testing turned up PFOA concentrations of about 100 parts per trillion in the drinking water of nearby Petersburg, New York, and North Bennington, Vermont,

which also had plastics plants. A second round of water testing in North Bennington recently yielded readings of up to 2,730 parts per trillion — nearly 40 times the EPA's new advisory limit.

News Channel 10 (ABC Albany)

To Watch: <http://news10.com/2016/05/19/epa-issues-health-advisory-level-for-lifetime-exposure-to-pfoa/>

EPA sets health advisory level for lifetime exposure to PFOA

By Rachel Yonkunas

Published: May 19, 2016, 1:21 pm Updated: May 19, 2016, 11:09 pm

WASHINGTON (NEWS10) – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a lifetime drinking water health advisory of 70 parts per trillion for human exposure to PFOA.

The EPA said the advisory is to provide Americans, including the most sensitive populations, with a margin of protection from a lifetime exposure to PFOA and PFOS from drinking water.

People in the Capital Region have been waiting for the health advisory for some time. But some said it makes the situation much scarier.

People who have been drinking the contaminated water for years are worried of the health effects. The EPA confirmed long-term exposure of PFOA above 70 ppt can cause cancer and several other health problems.

Now, eyes are on the New York State Capitol as people wait to see if Governor Andrew Cuomo will act.

“We still don’t have our blood tests, so many folks don’t have point of entry treatment systems that need them,” Michele Baker, Hoosick resident, said. “They don’t have water test results. I mean it’s just been a failure by New York State. This is Governor Cuomo’s chance to step up, find an acceptable health level, and protect the safety of all New Yorkers.”

The health advisory requires local, county and state officials to promptly notify the public and take action by consulting with the state water agency.

Michael Hickey is the man who discovered the PFOA contamination in the village of Hoosick Falls.

“With the number, it also gives you steps to follow,” he said. “And I think that’s really where our local government fell down. It was really: what do you do when you find it?”

But New York’s level remains at 100 ppt while health officials pore over the EPA’s announcement.

The Cuomo Administration said it is pushing the New York State Department of Health and Department of Environmental Conservation to give an update on the state’s plan. Back in March, Cuomo said they were waiting on the EPA to set a lifetime health advisory for them.

“Once they set that level, then it’s our responsibility at the state, local and county level to make sure we are doing what needs to do to hit that level,” he said at the time.

But for people without clean water, there isn’t a safe number.

“This just got more scarier today,” Baker said. “I mean, we were told first 400, then 100, now it’s down to 70. I mean, zero is the only acceptable number.”

In addition on Thursday, Taconic Plastics in Petersburg was named a Superfund Site. The plant is now responsible for PFOA cleanup.

Private wells in Petersburg that show PFOA levels above 70 ppt now qualify for a carbon filter. In Hoosick Falls, all homeowners on private wells currently qualify for a filter.

But the state has yet to answer if the new advisory level from the EPA will change that.

Schumer Statement On EPA’s New PFOA And PFOS Standards:

“I am pleased that the EPA has heeded my call to release updated drinking water health advisories for the highly-toxic chemicals PFOA and PFOS. Communities like Hoosick Falls, Petersburg and Newburgh understand all too well the uncertainty and anxiety that contamination from these chemicals can cause. The EPA’s new guidance will go a long way in protecting public health and arming local officials with the most up-to-date information to keep our drinking water safe from harmful contaminants.” – U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer

Statement from Vermont Department of Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD on U.S. EPA Drinking Water Health Advisories for PFOA and PFOS Announced May 19, 2016

“The Health Department evaluated all of the scientific information available at the time when setting Vermont’s advisory level of 20 parts per trillion for PFOA in drinking water.

Now that EPA has set a new advisory level of 70 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS combined, we will evaluate the hundreds of pages of supporting documents just released by EPA to assess how this differs from our current advisory level, and consider if any changes are warranted.

We remain committed to protecting the health of Vermonters from these harmful chemicals.”

New York State Department of Health Commissioner Howard Zucker and Acting Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos today issued the following statement:

“Earlier this year, Governor Cuomo joined Governor Peter Shumlin of Vermont and Governor Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire in calling on the federal Environmental Protection Agency to acknowledge that PFOA contamination is not a state or regional problem, but rather a national problem that requires consistent federal guidelines. We are pleased that the EPA has today issued a lifetime health advisory of 70 PPT for long-term exposure to PFOA and PFOS in drinking water. Both of our agencies are thoroughly reviewing the EPA’s guidance as we continue our aggressive efforts to ensure that all communities in New York State have access to water that’s safe to drink.

As part of Governor Cuomo’s Water Quality Rapid Response Task Force, DEC and DOH are working to evaluate potential threats to drinking water supplies statewide and assist communities with testing and technical assistance. In communities with elevated levels of PFOA and/or PFOS, the state is actively working with local officials to install filtration systems to remove contaminants, identify alternative water sources and/or take other appropriate actions to reduce exposure. The state will hold all responsible parties accountable for the costs associated with the full remediation of the contamination.”

PFOA and PFOS have been used to make carpets, clothing, fabrics for furniture, paper packaging for food, and other materials that are resistant to water, grease, or stains. In 2006, the EPA says they asked eight companies using PFOA to phase out use and chemicals used to break down PFOA. Those companies have stated at the end of 2015, they phased out the use of PFOA.

According to the EPA, the establishment of the advisories follows an assessment from the latest peer-reviewed science to provide water system operators, and state, tribal, and local officials who have the primary responsibility of overseeing these systems.

The state says it will review the EPA’s guidance and hold all responsible parties accountable for costs associated with full remediation of the contamination.

CBS TV Albany

EPA declares official standard for PFOA, PFOS contamination for lifetime exposure

By WRGB Staff Thursday, May 19th 2016

<http://cbs6albany.com/news/hoosick-falls-crisis/epa-declares-official-standard-for-pfoa-pfoh-contamination>

The EPA has released official long- term exposure guidelines for PFOA, PFOS contamination.

Released documents state that concentrations of PFOA and PFOS below 70 parts per trillion is not expected to result in adverse health effects over a lifetime of exposure.

WNYT (NBC Albany)

State declares 'Superfund Site' in Petersburg for PFOA contamination

Jessica Layton Updated: 05/19/2016 11:41 PM

Emily Marpe's house overlooking the town of Petersburg is her dream property. One that had her on Cloud 9 when she bought it five years ago. It sits on two acres and has a great swing set for her two kids.

But underneath the slide on that nice swing set sits the source of this mother's fear and anxiety. Well water that tested at more than 2-thousand parts per trillion for PFOA. That's more than 30 times what the EPA now says is safe.

Asked how she's coping since the contamination came to light, she had to pause for a moment before saying "I gotta say, today a big weight came off."

Thursday the DEC declared Taconic Plastics a state Superfund site. Telling the company to clean up the contamination crisis that's caused people like Emily to lose sleep.

"I think that's wonderful because now the state can oversee what happens here in Petersburg," Emily added.

In all this mess, Taconic Plastics says it's doing its part. They've installed 30 filtration systems at private wells, they're paying for the bottled water residents pick up each week and they're paying for the town filtration system, that should be up and running in August.

Town Supervisor Pater Schapook said he's relieved some decisions have been made but insists Taconic has been a good neighbor.

"It's unfortunate for them, this whole situation arose, because they (Taconic Plastics) didn't do it on purpose," Schapook said.

As I pointed out -- it's also unfortunate for everyone worried about their health. Schapook responded, "Oh exactly. It's been bad all around."

People like Emily hope that's about to turn around.

"Vindication for our town. Things should start moving quicker," she said.

We should point out Emily had a filtration system installed on her well. They use the water to shower but not for drinking. For that -- she's getting bottled water at town hall.

Another concern she had is about blood testing. I asked the state about that. A representative with the health department says to call 518-402-7950 if you want to have your blood sampled for PFOA.

Mid-Hudson News

EPA sets significantly stricter threshold for chemical contamination of Newburgh water

EPA change puts Washington Lake back on the danger list

NEWBURGH – When the levels of the chemicals PFOA and PFOS were initially mentioned regarding contamination of Newburgh's Washington Lake water supply, federal and state officials said the danger threshold was 200 parts per trillion, and since the lake's average was only 140-150 parts per trillion, the city had nothing to worry about.

On Thursday, the EPA lowered that danger level to 70 parts per trillion.

City Manager Michael Ciaravino told the city council Thursday night that makes the timeliness of a solution that much more critical.

"We now have with the current thresholds readings at Washington Lake that exceeded by double the newly revised standards," Ciaravino said. "The very first thing I intent to focus on is our ability to qualify for the disaster relief under the superfund and we have already begun in earnest and have communicated with environmental counsel regarding this update."

Newburgh officials have shut off the Washington Lake drinking water supply and cut over to their Brown's Pond backup, but that water, which is said to be safe to drink, only has a few months of supply. And the city has spent over \$34,000 in a month to perform maintenance, upgrades and legal advice regarding the conversion.

If the city were to tap into the New York City aqueduct, it could cost it over \$200,000 per month so Ciaravino is exploring the possibility of drilling Newburgh's own wells to secure a long-term supply of clean water from an aquifer.

State and federal officials have yet to pinpoint the source of the chemicals. While they are components of aircraft firefighting foam and the New York Air National Guard at Stewart Airport handles the firefighting responsibilities for the entire facility, only Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney has pointed the finger at the Guard base as one possible source.

On Thursday Maloney said with the significant lowering of the danger threshold, "we need the EPA and DoD [Department of Defense] to take emergency action to clean up this mess right now and keep families in Newburgh safe."

Mayor Judy Kennedy has nothing but praise for the city workers who stepped up to the plate over the last month to work at a fever pitch to cut over to Brown's Pond.

TWC News Albany

EPA Releases New Health Guidelines for PFOA, PFOS Found in Drinking Water

By TWC News Web Staff

Thursday, May 19, 2016 at 01:46 PM EDT

The EPA has released new health guidelines for PFOA and PFOS found in drinking water.

PFOA was the chemical found in the water supply in Hoosick Falls and Petersburg.

The new health advisory levels have been set to 70 parts per trillion.

When first tested at the St. Gobain facility in Hoosick Falls, the EPA measured the levels at 18,000 parts per trillion.

A filtration system has since been installed, eliminating traces of the chemical, making the water safe to use again in Hoosick Falls.

In Petersburg, multiple homes have tested above the new acceptable levels.

Taconic Plastics is believed to be the source of contamination. Residents in the town have grown impatient with leaders as they await to learn when they can get blood tested.

The town even ran out of bottled water to give to residents over the weekend. That supply has since been replenished.

Also, PFOS levels in Washington Lake and Silver Stream are in the range of 145 to 150 parts per trillion.

Washington Lake used to supply Newburgh's drinking water, until the city found out about the continuing levels of PFOS.

The city switched to Brown's Pond as a drinking source, since almost no levels of PFOS were found in that water.

Newburgh is still working to determine where the PFOS contamination is coming from.

Senator Schumer on New Standards: "I am pleased that the EPA has heeded my call to release updated drinking water health advisories for the highly-toxic chemicals PFOA and PFOS. Communities like Hoosick Falls, Petersburg and Newburgh understand all too well the uncertainty and anxiety that contamination from these chemicals can cause. The EPA's new guidance will go a long way in protecting public health and arming local officials with the most up-to-date information to keep our drinking water safe from harmful contaminants."

TWC News Albany

DEC: Taconic Plastics to Blame, to Pay for Petersburg PFOA Contamination

By Tanja Rekhi Updated Thursday, May 19, 2016 at 11:39 PM EDT

The state Department of Environmental Conservation will go after Taconic Plastics to pay for the PFOA remediation effort in Petersburg, the DEC announced Thursday.

"Protecting public health and the environment remains the number-one priority in Petersburg, and the state and our local partners have moved swiftly to bring clean, safe drinking water to all residents of the town as quickly as possible," DEC Acting Commissioner Basil Seggos said.

On Thursday, the DEC branded Taconic Plastics as a superfund site, which provides the state with extra authority to take necessary remedial measures.

"As our investigation continues and we learn more about the extent of the

contamination, we will take aggressive actions to hold the responsible party accountable for all costs associated with full remediation of all impacted areas," Seggos said in a statement.

The DEC now will work to identify the areas that pose a public health or environmental risk.

In a statement, Taconic spokesman Jon Pierce wrote, "Today's announcement by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is another step in what has been a long process for the company and the Petersburg community. ... On February 19, 2016, we submitted an application to DEC's Brownfield Cleanup Program to facilitate the remediation. While that application has been pending, Taconic has installed carbon filtration systems on more than 30 drinking water wells, provided bottled water to residents and worked to further address water supply issues in the town, including agreeing to design and install a treatment system for the municipal water supply.

"DEC's selection of the Superfund Program to oversee the cleanup will not affect Taconic's continued cooperation in addressing this matter to protect our neighbors, employees and the community."

The state has already directed Taconic Plastics to install a treatment system on the Petersburg's water supply, which is expected to be installed by mid-July and operational in August, according to the DEC.

DEC also ordered Taconic Plastics to install a treatment system on private wells impacted by PFOA contamination.

Meantime, the E-P-A has released new health guidelines for P-F-O-A and P-F-O-S found in drinking water. The new health advisory levels have been set to 70 parts per trillion instead of 100 parts per trillion.

Petersburgh resident Edward Perrotti-Sousis says no amounts should be acceptable.

"Everyone's getting caught up on the number. The number doesn't matter," said Perrotti-Sousis. "What matters is someone put it in the water and now it needs to be taken out. It should be a zero detect for everybody."

Patch.com -- Merrimack, NH

By Tony Schinella (Patch Staff) - May 19, 2016 6:33 pm ET

EPA Releases New 'Lifetime' PFOA Exposure Level Data

CONCORD, NH - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has issued new “lifetime drinking water health advisory levels” for both perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) at 70 parts per trillion (ppt), according to Jim Martin of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services.

When both chemicals are found in drinking water, the combined concentrations should also be at 70 ppt, a much lower level than the previous level of 100 ppt.

Communities in New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York that have found drinking water systems and wells contaminated with the chemicals, have been waiting a long time for the EPA health advisory to be revised, due to health concerns about whether or not the chemicals affect the growth and development of hormone levels including thyroid hormone, liver enzyme levels, cholesterol levels, immune function or occurrence of certain types of cancer.

Perfluorocarbons or PFCs are a man-made chemical used in a variety of products – like non-stick cookware, weather resistant clothing, and carpeting – that makes them resistant to heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. Many chemicals in this group, including PFOA, are commonly present in the environment and do not break down easily. Studies have shown that nearly all people have some level of PFCs in their blood.

Martin said that the NH DES was working closely with the NH Department of Health and Human Services to “quickly review the scientific basis” for the new health advisories and was already taking steps to provide bottled water to all known private drinking water well users that have tested at 70 ppt or more of either chemical or with combined readings.

“(The) NHDES will move quickly with emergency rule making to set a ground water cleanup and drinking water standard for contaminants,” Martin noted. “NHDES will then work to establish permanent rules, with full public comment and engagement processes.”

So far, elevated levels of the chemicals have been found in water in Amherst, Bedford, Manchester, Merrimack, Litchfield, Londonderry, and at the Pease Tradeport in Portsmouth.

U.S. Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-NH, said she was pleased that the EPA had finally answered her “repeated requests” to release new standards on the chemical levels.

“New Hampshire residents deserve to know whether or not their water resources are safe,” she stated. “I will continue to monitor the increasing instances of potentially dangerous PFOA and PFOS levels in water resources in several communities across our state and ensure that the EPA is working with local officials and communities to take every action possible for the safety of all Granite State residents.”

U.S. Rep. Ann McLane Kuster, D-NH, said the new standards would provide “greater clarity in how the state can help respond to the health concerns of communities” with contaminated water supplies.

"I urged the EPA to expeditiously release this public health advisory so that residents and agencies in the state can take action," she said. "Many New Hampshire residents rely on private wells as their primary source of drinking water, and are rightfully concerned about the potential long-term health impacts of exposure to unsafe levels of these chemicals. I commend the EPA for providing the new Lifetime Health Advisory Level for PFOA and PFOS."

Gov. Maggie Hassan also responded stating that while most New Hampshire households that fall into the category were already receiving bottled water, the NH DES took immediate steps to expand the water to others.

"Granite Staters who have been exposed to contaminated water understandably have many concerns about their own health and the health of their children, and helping them understand the risks posed by emerging contaminants and aggressively addressing those risks is critical to public health and the well-being of our families," she said.

Wall Street Journal

EPA Issues New Health Advisories for Chemical Found Near Some Plastics Plants

Agency decreases acceptable concentrations of PFOA and PFOS

The Environmental Protection Agency announced a new health advisory Thursday for perfluorooctanoic acid, a potentially toxic chemical, calling for water utilities across the nation to adhere to a stricter guideline than the agency had previously recommended.

In recent months, state investigators in New York, Vermont and New Hampshire have found high levels of the chemical, known as PFOA, in drinking-water wells and groundwater near former and current chemical plants, alarming residents and raising concern about PFOA contamination in other parts of the country.

The Environmental Working Group, a Washington-based advocacy group that assesses chemicals in consumer products and the environment, sent a letter in late April to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy urging the agency to set an enforceable drinking-water standard for the chemical and to force former manufacturers to disclose all sites in the U.S. where they used, made or dumped PFOA.

On Thursday, the EPA declared that drinking water with PFOA concentrations of 70 parts per trillion or more were not healthy for human consumption. In 2009, the agency issued a provisional guideline of 400 parts per trillion. The EPA has been reviewing PFOA guidelines for months, and state environmental agencies have been setting their own guidelines. New York and New Hampshire both set limits of 100 parts per trillion, while Vermont had a stricter standard of 20 parts per trillion.

PFOA can be harmful to animals in high doses, causing tumors in the liver and other

parts of the body, according to several scientific studies. A multiyear medical study in the 2000s of 70,000 people near a plant in West Virginia that made PFOA found “some suggestions” of “probable links” between high exposure to the chemical and illnesses, including cancer.

The agency Thursday also set a 70 parts per trillion guideline for perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, a chemical similar to PFOA that was used to make products stain resistant. PFOS has been found in studies to be harmful to the immune systems of animals.

For both chemicals, the guidelines are lifetime-exposure advisories.

The provisional health advisory for PFOS had been 200 parts per trillion. The EPA stated that if both chemicals were found in drinking water, the 70 parts per trillion limit applies for the two chemicals combined. The advisories are not regulations that can be enforced by the EPA, but health guidelines issued for water utilities, and state environmental and health agencies to consider.

“If these chemicals are found in drinking-water systems above these levels, system operators should quickly conduct additional sampling to assess the level, scope and source of contamination,” according to an EPA statement. “They should also promptly notify consumers and consult with their state drinking-water agency to discuss appropriate next steps. Public notification is especially important for pregnant or nursing women because of the impact these chemicals can have on the development of fetuses and breast-fed or formula-fed infants.”

Some state officials were quick to applaud the new guidelines. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services spokesman Jim Martin said his department would work to provide bottled water to any communities where drinking-water tests exceeded the 70 parts per trillion limit.

The Environmental Working Group said the new levels aren’t strict enough and urged the agency to impose a legally enforceable limit.

Factories for decades used PFOA as a plastic coating and to make consumer products such as Teflon nonstick pans, waterproof jackets and pizza boxes. Former large manufacturers or users of PFOA, including 3M Co. and DuPont Co. , agreed in 2006 to phase out PFOA production and use by December 2015. Public concern over PFOA has spread through upstate New York and New England since August 2014, when a resident of Hoosick Falls, N.Y., near the Vermont border, tested his drinking water and found high levels of the acid. The man was concerned because his father, a former employee of the town’s plastics plant that used PFOA, died of cancer.

Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics, a subsidiary of Saint-Gobain SA of France,

operates plants in Merrimack, N.H., and Hoosick Falls, N.Y., and used to operate a plant in North Bennington, Vt. Since last year, state investigators have found PFOA contamination near all three sites, and they cited the plants as potential sources.

A company spokeswoman said in a statement that, according to the EPA, the new advisory is “not a legally enforceable federal standard and is subject to change as new information becomes available.” The company, however, believes the new guidelines will help “state and local governments to make consistent decisions concerning the levels of PFOA in drinking water,” she said.

Shawn Dalton, 65, a retired communications manager who lives not far from the Merrimack plant, thought until Thursday that water from his well, which tested 73 parts per trillion for PFOA, was safe. Now he knows it is three parts above the new guideline. He was glad for the new guidelines, however, because it means he now can hold government officials and companies accountable, he said.

“At least now the federal government has put a stake in the ground,” he said.

Write to Cameron McWhirter at cameron.mcwhirter@wsj.com

The Intercept

With New EPA Advisory, Dozens of Communities Suddenly Have Dangerous Drinking Water

Sharon Lerner May 19 2016, 2:36 p.m.

The EPA announced new drinking water health advisory levels today for the industrial chemicals PFOA and PFOS. The new levels — .07 parts per billion (ppb) for both chemicals — are significantly lower than standards the agency issued in 2009, which were .4 ppb for PFOA and .2 ppb for PFOS. In areas where both PFOA and PFOS are present, the advisory suggests a maximum combined level of .07 ppb. While the old levels were calculated based on the assumption that people were drinking the contaminants only for weeks or months, the new standards assume lifetime exposure and reflect more recent research.

The new federal standards may unify what has been an inconsistent official response to the presence of these perfluorinated chemicals, or PFCs, in drinking water. They will also instantaneously create official water contamination crises in dozens of cities and towns across the country.

According to the EPA’s most recent data on unregulated drinking water contaminants, released in January, 14 drinking water systems around the country reported levels of PFOA that exceed the new federal threshold, while 40 reported PFOS above the new cutoff. In all, water systems in 18 states, as well as in Guam, are contaminated.

Some of these water systems have already begun to quietly address the problem. In Suffolk County, New York, where public drinking water wells show PFOS levels of .33 and .53 ppb, the contaminated water “has either been blended with other wells to reduce the level of the compound to non-detection or their use has been limited to the greatest extent possible,” according to Kevin Durk, director of water quality and laboratory services for the Suffolk County Water Authority. Though he does not know the level of PFOS in the water that comes out of local taps, Durk wrote in an email that “it is a virtual certainty that levels of any detected chemical would have been reduced.”

Similarly, the Security Water and Sanitation District in Colorado Springs has been struggling to clean up its contaminated water since 142 tests detected PFCs. The district has shut down seven out of 26 wells and is blending water to lower levels, according to Roy Heald, the district’s general manager.

But other water company operators have yet to lower their PFC levels. Steve Anderson, owner of the Oatman Water Company in Scottsdale, Arizona, where PFOS measured .2 and .23 in the most recent EPA testing, learned that the chemical was in his water only recently, after he received a call from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. Anderson, who suspects the PFOS originated from firefighting foam used by the nearby Oatman Fire Department, said he is “trying to come up with a solution.”

Until today, there was a wide range of official opinion on the level of contamination that presented a health danger. The military, which is in the throes of a massive cleanup of 664 contaminated fire- and crash-training sites, has been using the EPA’s older standards for PFOA and PFOS to guide its efforts and help determine who receives clean drinking water and remediation of contaminated private wells. (The Department of Defense did not respond to inquiries about how the new advisory levels would alter its cleanup plan.)

Others have set more stringent standards. On January 28, the EPA advised residents of Hoosick Falls, New York, not to use water with PFOA levels above .1 ppb. And a panel of scientists who spent years researching some 70,000 people whose water contained PFOA levels of at least .05 ppb, found probable links between that level of exposure and testicular cancer, kidney cancer, thyroid disease, preeclampsia, ulcerative colitis and high cholesterol. In 2010, New Jersey’s Drinking Water Quality Institute calculated a safety limit of .04 for PFOA. Vermont currently has the lowest state drinking water limit for PFOA, .02 ppb.

The EPA report noted that in humans “the developing fetus and newborn is particularly sensitive to PFOA-induced toxicity.”

The levels released today are based on numerous studies connecting the chemicals with health effects. For PFOS, the report notes, studies of lab animals exposed to the chemical reported “developmental effects (decreased body weight, survival, and increased serum glucose levels and insulin resistance in adult offspring), reproductive (mating behavior), liver toxicity (liver weight co-occurring with decreased cholesterol,

hepatic steatosis), developmental neurotoxicity (altered spatial learning and memory), immune effects, and cancer (thyroid and liver).”

The report also acknowledged research on human populations that has found associations between PFOS and immune suppression, thyroid disease, high cholesterol, and reduced fertility. It also acknowledged a possible connection between PFOS and bladder, colon, and prostate cancer.

For PFOA, the research included studies on monkeys, rats, and mice showing “developmental effects (survival, body weight changes, reduced ossification, delays in eye opening, altered puberty, and retarded mammary gland development), liver toxicity (hypertrophy, necrosis, and effects on the metabolism and deposition of dietary lipids), kidney toxicity (weight), immune effects, and cancer (liver, testicular, and pancreatic).”

The new health advisory for PFOA was also based on human studies, which showed “associations between PFOA exposure and high cholesterol, increased liver enzymes, decreased vaccination response, thyroid disorders, pregnancy-induced hypertension and preeclampsia, and cancer (testicular and kidney).” The EPA report noted that in humans “the developing fetus and newborn is particularly sensitive to PFOA-induced toxicity.”

“Taken together,” the report notes, “the weight of evidence for human studies supports the conclusion that PFOA exposure is a human health hazard.” The exact phrasing was used in the PFOS report as well.

While calling the new level “a very long-overdue step in the right direction,” Robert Bilott, an attorney overseeing a class-action suit over PFOA contamination near a DuPont plant in West Virginia, cautioned that “the new guideline is still too high, as exposures at even the new guideline level would allow PFOA to continue to build up to ever-increasing, unacceptable levels in human blood.”

Bilott also noted that the new levels are informal guidelines, as opposed to enforceable regulatory limits. “If it was enforceable,” he said, “the EPA could issue unilateral orders requiring the responsible party to clean it up.”

Updated May 19, 2016:

After this piece was published a spokesperson for the Department of Defense wrote in an email that “DoD will use the EPA’s new Health Advisory levels to determine risk to human health from past contamination. DoD’s approach is comprehensive and designed to identify where we have had releases of PFOA or PFOS and to determine if the release has impacted drinking water above the Environmental Protection Agency’s Health Advisory level. Where that has happened DoD will work closely with the regulatory agencies and the local community to provide alternative drinking water supplies.”

Environmental Working Group Blog

New EPA Guidelines on PFCs Welcome – but Still Fall Short

By Bill Walker, Investigations Editor and David Andrews, Senior Scientist

Thursday, May 19, 2016

Today the Environmental Protection Agency issued a long-awaited drinking water health advisory for the perfluorinated chemicals PFOA and PFOS. But EPA's advisory falls far short of what's needed to fully protect public health, and it is not a legally enforceable limit.

PFOA was formerly used by DuPont to make Teflon, and PFOS was formerly an ingredient in 3M's Scotchguard. Both chemicals were also used for firefighting at military airfields and commercial airports. They were phased out after revelations that the manufacturers had withheld decades of studies showing that the chemicals were extraordinarily persistent in the environment and build up in people's blood.

Since then, EPA-mandated tests have found these and related chemicals in the drinking water of more than 6.5 million people in 27 states. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says both substances contaminate the blood of almost all Americans, and they can be passed from mothers to unborn children. A robust body of independent research has linked the chemicals to cancer, thyroid disease, endocrine disruption and other health problems.

The EPA's new health advisory for the combined level of PFOA and PFOS in drinking water is 70 parts per trillion- – less than one drop of water in 20 Olympic-sized swimming pools. EPA says that at this level, the chemicals are “not expected to result in adverse health effects over a lifetime of exposure.”

Disturbingly, however, new evidence suggests that there may be no safe level of exposure. Research published in August of last year by Phillipe Grandjean of the Harvard School of Public Health and Richard Clapp of the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, concluded that an “approximate” safe level for these chemicals would be no

more than 1 part per trillion – 70 times lower than EPA’s new advisory level. And EWG’s own analysis of Grandjean and Clapp’s data showed that the true safe level is even lower – 0.3 parts per trillion. EPA did not base today’s drinking water advisory level on this research but noted that it “could reflect a window of susceptibility in early childhood.”

The EPA based its advisory on studies showing that exposure during critical windows of development in the womb or through breast milk after birth led to developmental changes. Studies in lab animals have found that exposure to PFOA led to accelerated puberty in males and reduced formation and solidification of bone, while exposure to PFOS led to decreased weight.

For the first time EPA is now advising that authorities responsible for the drinking water quality should take into account cumulative exposures to both developmental toxicants. This also raises important questions about other PFC contaminants in water and whether cumulative exposures to the entire class of similar chemicals should be considered.

Importantly, the new advisory level is not a legally enforceable limit. EPA has said it could be 2019 or beyond before the agency even decides whether to start the process of setting a legal limit.

EPA’s limited action today comes 15 years after the agency was first alerted to the severe PFOA contamination of drinking water near DuPont’s Teflon plant in West Virginia, and two years before that to 3M’s studies showing deaths among monkeys exposed to low level of PFOS. The weak and outdated federal chemical safety law limits the agency’s ability to move promptly and decisively, but the ever-widening evidence of contamination shows that this is a nationwide public health crisis.

EPA must move more quickly to protect Americans’ health.

Mary Mears

Deputy Director Public Affairs and Chief Public Outreach Branch

U.S. EPA Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, the US VI and eight Indian Nations)

(212) 637-3673 (Direct Office)

(212) 637-3660 (General Office)

(646) 369-0077 (Cell)